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ARJUNA AND THE SELVAS OF SOUTH AMERICA.

In the midst of the constant enormous changes that are going on around us during vast ages—lands being submerged under water giving rise to continental islands and water giving birth to innumerable islands of coral and volcanic formation, towns being deserted or buried under the burning ashes of a volcanic eruption and new towns owing to political, commercial, industrial and locomotive causes suddenly springing into existence and flourishing with all the pomp and grandeur of new blown dignity, mountains consisting of extremely old rock having been 'faulted' into masses of tableshaped mountains long before huge gigantic ranges of mountains came into existence, large inland expanses of water as extensive as the Mediterranean drying up giving place to extensive lowlands, the courses of large rivers being completely changed, the fossil remains of mammoth and rhinoceros being found in the Tundras at present a dreary marshy swamp of waste producing nothing but moss and lichens, immense volcanic ranges being submerged under water and preserving in their place nothing

but a number of powerful volcanic islands,—amidst these vicissitudes of life to which the world is subject like nations or individuals, it is a matter for congratulation that we have in the Selvas of South America a modern characteristic representative of their ancient prototype Gondava Forest so well described in the Mahabharata. This well known Forest as related in that Poem was sacrificed to the flames by the great and invincible warrior Arjuna and the Kingdom of Gondavaprastha given to Pandavas by their uncle Dhritarashtra in settlement of all their claims against the throne of Hastinapura before the great War was thereby vastly extended and immensely enriched and we are going to ask where is the modern Arjuna who would clear the great continent of South America of the enormous Jungle called Selvas by the Spaniards occupying the basin of the Amazon by consigning them to flames or otherwise destroying them and thereby extend by hundreds and hundreds of miles the limits of the Portuguese Brazilian Republic and increase the wealth the prosperity, the power and the population of the state? We shall here briefly attempt to shew as far as we can that so far as modern exploration goes the description given of the Selvas by modern English Geographers and the physical causes that have created and maintained them till they have now become an unconquerable mighty world of trees coincides with amazing similarity with that given in the Mahabharata of the Gondava Jungle which appears to have come into existence and most richly flourished under exactly similar physical conditions The immense extent, the Tropical climate, the production, the birds, the beasts, the enormous creepers, climbers and parasites, the gigantic trees, their aerial roots, the original inhabitants of the Forest the Indian Americans like the Asuras of the Indian Jungle, the insects, the reptiles, the abundant constant rainfall under Equatorial heat, the voluminous and mighty river penetrating through the Forest, their dark thick shade, their impenetrability and the powerful Indra's jealous sovereignity have all their exact counterparts in Arjuna's Indian Forest. Under what circumstances nd insuperable difficulties, with what miraculous weapons and

with whose help the Forest was destroyed by Arjuna and who survived and escaped the annihilation and what occurred in the course of conflagration must be interesting to us when we remember that a similar destruction of the Spanish jungle was never attempted by the original inhabitants the Red Indians nor by the civilised Incas on the Titicaca Plateau nor of course by the European colonists of the Iberian Peninsula. We shall first describe the Forest Jungles of the new continent so far as they have been explored with the physical causes that have brought them into existence and nourished them shewing how the great continent has been almost overwhelmed by them and deprived of the otherwise richest plain watered by the mightest river in the World and thereby made the Indo-Gangetic Plain the most populous and festile plain in the World which but for Arjuna's brilliant exploit perhaps the first beneficent exploit of his career in the World after the display of his skill in archery at Panchala might now have been rotting as an inpenetrable forest.

The Selvas are a huge stretch of dark, dense, hot and wet Jungles or Forest plains under Equatorial heat and rainfall extending for hundreds of miles on either side of the Amazon under the deep shadow of which the natives the American Indians are overwhelmed physically and morally amid the mazes of Tropical creepers and undergrowth, huge trees with wonderful roots part of which are above the gronnd forming twisted festoons of air roots. Round their massive and rugged trunks twine creepers with thick twisted stems and below is dense undergrowth and stagnant marsh where mosquitoes breed. All is green and moist, tho air is oppressive and among the trees dart gaily coloured birds and insects. The human inhabitants of the Forest are few and primitive. Many have little food beside the wild fruits to be had for the gathering. Others obtain alligators, turtles and fish from the rivers often shooting them with bow and arrow. Others clear patches in the Forest and plant the manioc palm from which Tapioca is made. This great breadth of the Equatorial rainfall is the largest area

of heaviest rainfall in the World. The enormous volume and the density of the Tropical forests are both due to the immense rainfall of this region. It would be impossible to give an idea of the richness of this Forest the extent of which is little less than that of Europe. Rubber is an important product. Palms, figs. mimosa and bamboo are characteristic trees and these are covered with creepers and parasites of many descriptions. This great Forest area is still little known except round the rivers and the density of its vegetation makes it very difficult to penetrate.

As these Forest areas are crossed by the Equator, both the North East and South East Tradewinds cross the vast expanse of the Atlantic and laden with enormous quantities of moisture sucked up from that ocean blow almost over the whole continent of South America which lies within the Tropics. No other continent in the World has so large an area of evaporating sea-surface lying to windward of it. The North and South Atlantic within the limits of 30 degrees North and South Latitude is the evaporating sea-surface and 30° North and South of the Equator is the exact limit of the two systems of Trade winds. These Trade winds blow day and night all the year round into the very beart of the continent carrying with them millions on millions of tons of moisture impinging on the coast at the largest angle viz. a right angle. They cross seas on some parts of which there is always a vertical sum and carry on their wings more moisture than any other wind in the World. South America is a continent where all the phenomena of physical nature are found on a grand, colossal and intelligible scale, the interminable maintains, the enormous number of volcanic and high peaks, the many mighty and voluminous rivers, the tremendous and awful expanse of vast rich green grassy plains, the enormous inexplorable extent of darkest and densest Jungles, the numerous high plateaux and table lands of Savanas or park like trees, its wonderful Railways in the clouds, the richest silver, gold, and diamond mines, the rich open Tropical woods like the Gran Chaco and Mattogrosso, the

extensive and free scope that the continent affords for the play of the Trades and Antitrades, the Tropical, Temperate and severely cold climates, its long Desert of Western Coast containing the Atacama desert on the Tropic of capricorn, all these immense varieties of physical phenomena present a grand magnificent view of nature making South America a model continent to study the physical pheuomena of the World.

The rain laden Trade winds on entering the continent encounter ranges of mountains which condense and precipitate their moisture, and at the foot of each range therefore they drop a great river. But when these winds meet at the Equator, they drive each other into the colder regions of the air where their moisture being condensed comes down in deluges of rains These winds therefore drop the largest river in the World, the Amazon at the western end of the Equator where they encounter the highest condenser they have ever met with in their passage across the continent viz., the Andes or the Cordilleras of South America which deprive these winds of every drop of their precious liquid which they bear on their wings like the heartless cowman who to satisfy his numerous customers gently forces from his majestic cow every drop of milk without leaving any residue for the poor starving calf that is struggling at the parent's forelegs to taste the sweet and nourishing liquid its natural inheritance.

Being therefore entirely robbed of all their precions burden they cross the Andes and enter the West coast as dry wind making that coast a desert.

At the Equator where the two systems meet we have the largest downpour and the largest river in the World Here therefore we have the two conditions of maximum vegetable life viz. maximum heat and maximum moisture. Hence here we find the largest and densest Forest in the World—The Selvas. We have not only more trees but more nnmerous varieties of trees and

plants. Where vegetable life is strongest, we have also most prolific life. The hum of the insects is heard on board vessels lying several miles off the coast.

These Forests extend for 1200 miles from west to east and 800 miles from north to south. They stretch from 7 degrees North Latitude to 15 degrees South Latitude and they are the largest broadest and most impenetrable Forest in the World on both sides of the Equator. The eastern forested magnificent slopes of the Andes in the Republics of Columbia Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia called Montana (montanya) by the Spaniards are also included in these mighty gigantic Forests. Another peculiarity of the Forest is the number of climbers, creepers and binders which interlace with their woody ropes the branches of the larger trees. These Forests can be explored only along the water ways afforded by the creeks, branches, small lakes and tributaries of the Amazon. Millions of birds, monkeys and other animals are born, live and die within this mighty world of trees without ever having the experience of touching the ground. The *Jaguar*, the Puma, the Snake, the Sloth, the alligator, and many terrible forms of reptiles abound.

Similar to these Selvas and exactly of the same type are the Central Forests of Africa in the basin of the Congo. The Congo was fully discovered and surveyed only in 1877. The Congo Forest of America is 1200 miles broad and may be compared with the Selvas through which the Amazon flows. The Amazon and Congo Forests are the largest and densest in the World. Both are on the Equator and both in the region of perpetual rainfall and a vertical sun. " Into these primeval *F*orests the sun though vertical cannot penetrate, except by sending down at midday thin pencils of rays into the gloom. They are the most unhealthy as well as the most fertile parts of the continent. They are hot being on the Equator, damp being in the region of heaviest rainfall. They are the largest in the World after the Selvas of the

Amazon. They are the densest and most tangled in the World. Except along the banks of the rivers they are practically unexplored. The thick growth will not allow the light to penetrate and darkness reigns. The trunk of the Baobab tree measures 100 ft. in circumference (This description is compiled from English Geographies by Herbertson, Lyde, Longman, Ernest Young, Meiklejohn, &c.)

Of the continents of the World only three lie on the Torrid zone, viz. South America, Africa and Asia. North America lies within the Temperate zone and the small portion lying south of Cancer is a narrow piece of land traversed by the Mexican Plateau. There can therefore arise no question of the present or former existence of Selvas in North America. Europe lies far north of Cancer and there could never have existed any Tropical Jungles in that continent. After South Americā and Africa the only continent where there is a possibility of the existence of jungles of the Selvas type is Asia. The southern part of Asia lies within the Tropics and we should expect these Selvas in that continent. If we do not find them in Asia now they must have existed in past times somewhere. Where could they have flourished? In further India? No, it is interspersed with the eastern affshoots of the Himalayas which traverse them from north to south and the rivers run down their valleys not parallel to the Equator like the Amazon or the Congo but from north to south. These countries therefore are not suited for the extensive growth of dense Tropical Jungles. The plain of China is exceedingly fertile and its rich yellow soil is watered by the Yangtesikiang which runs parallel to the Equator. It is under the influence of the South East Monsoon of the China Sea which bursts upon the plain with violent storms of rain and terrific thunder and lightning during the summer months. Though the winter is a dry season yet China is well irrigated by the South East Monsoon. This seems to be a fit region for the growth of Selvas. We do not now find them however there. The

Chinese are a very ancient nation with a very ancient civilisation who must have occupied the country in ages past and prevented the growth of such *Forests*. But whatever might have been the case with China, it could not affect the question of the existence of darkest and densest *Jungles* on the banks of the jumna. All the conditions which are favourable to their growth exist in northern India in their entirety. Maximum heat, maximum moisture, one of the largest rivers in the World, the most perfect Monsoon and a large mass of lowland along the valley of the jumna and Ganges are all the conditions which will give birth to the gradual growth of the Tropical jungles in the richest and most fertile Indogangetic plain of Hindustan. The Gondava *Forests* therefore must be the Asiatic Selvas corresponding in many respects to the Selvas of the Amazon and the Forests of the Congo and Arjuna by his uneqalled valour and skill laid the whole Indian World under the deepest debt of gratitude by clearing them from his kingdom. Viewed in this light the description given in the Mahabharata of the destruction of this *Forest* by Arjuna though it might at first seem rather repulsive to us for its details and not very relevant to the general thread of the story could not but be interesting to us and every minute detail must be highly instructive. We now proceed briefly to narrate the story of Gondava *Forest* as related in the Mahabharata in the chapter on Gondavadaganam or burning of Gondava *Forest*. It must not be supposed however that besides the Selvas and Congo Forests there are no wet *Jungles* anywhere-else. Small areas of primeval wet *Jungles* are found in Assam, in Western ghauts, Indo-China East Indian Archipelago, Upper Guinea, Mexico and Central America. But enormous extents of such *Jungles* are now found only on the Amazon and Congo and in ancient times existed on the *Jumna* and Ganges.

(*To be Continued.*)

T. VIRABADRA MUDALIAR, B.A., B.L.

A CONGRESS OF RELIGIONS.

by

V. Sundaram Aiyar Esq., M. I. R. S., Joint Editor of the Sri Krishna Review.

To the bent of human mind perhaps there is nothing more appealing and captivating than for men to lead a truly spiritual life which aims at the realisation of Eternal Bliss. From the dawn of humanity the one predominant element discernible in the life and thought of those who would dive deep into the philosophy of life has been to find out ways and means to make oneself follow the track which leads to the highest beautitude, *Moksha.* It is with this end in view that they founded religions which are codes that help men in the attainment of spiritual perfection in human life. The most important factor in the foundation of spiritual life is the desire for the hankering after God. When the mind of a man is possessed entirely by a strong desire of having communion with Him his passions are subdued, his mind is imbued with good intentions and sin becomes his dread. When in the minds of the devotee the desire of hankering after God reigns supreme he gives up all worldliness and becomes a moral man. In his ardent prayer for the sight of Him he is occasionally favoured with the vision of God. He passes on to the state of God-consciousness which does not last long, and soon he lapses to his former position. He craves and thirsts for Him and his desire gets strongly planted. On a happy moment the Almighty gives His presence to the devotee who in vokes his aid and in his mind is created a desire to live, move and have his being with Him. The mind controls over the senses and he tries to live up to what the Gita says : " Fearlessness. purity of heart, perseverance, Yoga, meditations, gifts self-restraint, sacrifice, study of the Vedas, penances, uprightness, non-doing of injury, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquil-

lity, freedom from fault-finding, compassion for all, absence of covetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of quarrelsomeness, freedom from variety, O Bharata, all these belong to him who is God-like." Indeed the devotee lives a truly spiritual life and tries to have a godly relation between the human soul and the Divine soul.

We have given above a short description of what it is to lead a spiritual life and it is needless to say that the dominance of religious spirit in man is a chief factor in the success of spiritual life. Even in universities the factor of religion ought not to be ignored. As Mr. Haldane rightly puts it, the University is the place of training where the exponents of knowledge of research are to be numbered and receive their spiritual baptism. It is the teaching of religion on cosmopolitan basis that has a sure and successful influence on the endeavour of men to have a healthy spiritual existence. The Jew obeys the laws of Moses; the Christian bows to the law of Christ; the Hindu looks back to Manu for the guidance of his conduct; and the Musalman relies upon the Koran as an authority in all matters and in all these cases the imprimature has come from a divine or inspired authority. Religion is therefore the foundation of morality that nothing can shake, the rock in which it can be built, and never be removed. We are glad that at present religious element is dormant in man and steps are being taken for the holding of religious Congresses for the betterment of the world. When in 1893 the Congress of Religions was held in Chicago it could be scarcely prophesied that it was not the first and last of its kind. In October last the second Congress was held at Copenhagen and men were widely awakened to the religious upheaval. This year the third Congress meets at Calcutta and from the arrangements that are being made there is a great deal of probability that it will be characterised by a remarkable friendliness among scholars of all nationalities. In April, 1911, will be held the fourth Congress at Athens and let us hope that all these harbinger an era of religious revival whose beneficial result cannot be over-estimated. We shall revert to

this subject after the Congress at Calcutta takes place. Meanwhile let us here quote what Mr. Norendra Nath Sen the talented Editor of the *Indian Mirror* says on the subject. A new era is dawning upon the spiritual horizon of India. A great religious wave will surge through the heart of the world, and not of India alone, with the beginning of the new cycle. We should watch the coming times, and prepare ourselves beforehand for the change which will be ushered into the spiritual world. Students of the ancient history of India will find that Religious Conventions or Councils were frequently held under the Buddhist kings not only to propagate the faith, but to preserve its principles from any pollating influence. The proceedings of four great Councils are on record—the first held in 543 B. C. after the passing away of Lord Buddha ; the second held a century afterwards to settle disputes between the more and less strict followers of Buddhism ; the third held in the reign of King Asoka in 244 B. C., which corrected many errors and heresies ; and the fourth held under the Scythian King Kanishka who ruled in North-Western India about 40 A. D. These Councils served the most important purpose of keeping the Buddhist doctrines pure. How much more Religious Conventions must be needed to-day when materialism has laid its hands upon every race of the world.

A SUGGESTION.

In the article on "Annual Sacrifices" in the August number of the Deepika the writer has fitly quoted alive from Thayumanavar, to support his ideas based on Upanishads. We are glad to note that the writer has rightly confectured the purport of the Tamil line when he says "that mind is represented by goat or leaper" from his knowledge of the origin of these sacrifices. The line quoted from Thayumanavar seems actually to refer to a goat because "துள்ளுமறி" means the leaping goat and "துள்ளுமறியா மனது பலிகொடுத்தேன்" means I have sacrificed a leaping

goat namely my the mind. It will not serve the purpose of the writer much by taking the line as meaning துள்ளும்+அறியா+மனது+பலிகொடுத்தேன், which simply depreciates the value of the goat sacrificed by ascribing unnecessarily the piethet ignorant, for what is offered must be valuable and pleasing to the Gods. If therefore we take the line as meaning துள்ளும்+மறியா+மனது+பலிகொடுத்தேன் (I have sacrificed the mind in line of a leaping goat) it will exactly correspond with the meaning of the passage in the Upanishads for which the writer contends, though he was as we have said before derived this meaning from the word probably "துள்ளு" alone construing "மறியா மனது" as "அறியா மனது". That the writer should through unconsciously have correctly understood the line even which making as lightly verbal deviation from it is due to the fact that he like Thayumanavar has derived his knowledge from the Upanishads, "மறி" is a common word in Tamil meaning ஆடு. It does not require very many illustrations sew however the following lines from திருக்கோவை.

(வேலனை யழைத்தல்)

வேலன்புகுந்து வெறியாடுக வெண்மறியறுக்க
காலன்புகுந்து அவியக்கழல் வைத்தெழிற்றில்லைநின்ற
மேலன்புகுந்தென்கணின் றானிருந்த வெண்காடனைய
பாலன்புகுந்திப் பரிசினினிற்பித்த பண்பினுக்கே. (286)

(இன்னலெய்தல்)

அயர்ந்தும்வெறிமறி யாவிசைசெகுத்தும் விளர்பலயலார்,
பெயர்ந்துமொழியாவிடி லென்னைபேசுவ பேர்ந்திருவர், etc.

In the above verses வெண்மறியறுக்க means sacrificed a goat, so in the line inquestion துள்ளுமறி means a leaping goat

Compare also :—

கேட்டியிளையோய்மன்றி கிளத்தும் ஒருவேள்வி
வேட்டனமியாங்கனது வேலையிடைதன்னில்
மாட்டுகனலூடொரு மறிததகர் எழுந்தே
ஈட்டமுறு மெய்மையடவெண்ணியதைமனதே.

(கந்தபுராணம்.) (p. 115., stanza 13.)

A TAMILIAN.

SRI TAHYUMANA SWAMIGAL BAKTHA JANA SABAH.

S. R. M. C. T. Ramaswami Chettiar,

Honorary President.

Proceedings of an extraordinary meeting held on the 20th day of March, 19 9, at St. Thayumanavar's Hall, Teppakulam, Thichinopoly with Mr. T. V. Shunmugam Pillai Avergal, Mirasdar in the chair.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED.

1. That, this Sabah heartily sympathises with the movement and thanks the President and the other members of the convention.

2. That, this Sabah elects, Sriman J. M. Nallaswami Pillai, Avergal, B.A., B.L., District Munsiff of Rajahmundary and the President of the Saiva Siddhanta Third Conference held at Negapatam in 1908, as its representative to Elucidate *Sivasm* at the convention.

3. That, this day's resolutions be translated into English and communicated to

(a) Mr. J. M. Nallaswami Pillai, Rajahmundry.
(b) Mr. K. B. Sen, Secretary, Calcutta.
(c) Editor, Siddhanta Deepika, Madras.

(Signed) T. V. SHUNMUGAM,

(True Translation)

(By order)

M. B. RAJAH.

For Secretary.

CONVENTION OF RELIGIONS IN INDIA.

TO BE HELD IN CALCUTTA.

The Convention of Religions in India, which was postponed a couple of months ago, will positively be held in the Calcutta Town Hall on the 9th, 10th and 11th April. It will be presided over by Mr. Sarode Charan Mitra, ex-judge of the High Court, and will consider papers submitted to it by Hindus, Christians, Mahomedans and others.

VERNACULARS IN HIGHER EDUCATION.

It is very much to be regretted that the Senate should have now resolved, though by a small majority, upon abolishing the Vernacular Composition test prescribed by Government, after mature consideration, for the new Intermediate Examination. It is some consolation, however, to see that some of the Senate members who may be looked upon as an authority in their respective vernaculars, as also the Heads of the Educational Departments in Madras and Mysore, very strongly protested against the abolition. Even under the old curriculum, where vernacular text-books, grammar, translation, and composition were all compulsory, students in Colleges and even Graduates have often found it very hard to express their ideas intelligibly and freely in their vernaculars—a fact admitted on all sides, not even the Government excepted. Now I will simply leave it to your readers to imagine what the consequences of the abolition of this surviving vernacular composition also will be. It is to be hoped that the Government will soon come to the rescue of the vernaculars, not only by restoring the composition test, but also by making it compulsory to study a second language.

Under the paternal care of the University the classical and vernacular languages have flourished for about half a century. If the existing condition are altered , these will die in course of time. If, therefore, the Senate and the Government do not wish to see them come to an untimely end, the only safe course will be to make them compulsory, as was the case hitherto, or, if that cannot be done, at least to allow them to be studied separately and not conjointly, as in the present curriculum. Group IV may accordingly be thus modified :—(*a*) Ancient or Modern History, (*b*) Logic, (*c*) a second language. Of the four Optional groups for the Intermediate Examination, only the fourth group makes a provision for the vernacular and classical languages. Even granting that all the four groups are equally patronised by students, three-fourths will be excluded from them. But on account of the great difficulty in learning a new classical language and its being tacked to a vernacular, not one student has ventured to apply for the fourth group in any of the local Colleges. This is clear evidence to prove that the vernaculars and classical language are doomed.

Even in the M. A, course under the old Regulations, the students had not to face such a severe ordeal. There, the vernaculars and classical languages were not grouped together but had only to be studied separately. It is true that the vernacular student has to study a second vernacular, but only a superficial knowledge of the latter is required. If vernacular and classical languages are to be studied together, students must be trained in both from the Middle School Classes.

T. Walker Esq., Member Text Book Committee writes this subject to the Madras Mail as follows :---

As one of those who desire the truest welfare of India, may I be allowed to express my sincere regret at the recent Resolution of the Senate of the University of Madras to abolish Vernacular Composition from the schedule of subjects prescribed for the Intermediate Examination? I am quite aware

that certain difficulties would be involved in the retention of the subject, from the point of view of the Professors of our Colleges, who very naturally wish to relieve the prescribed curriculum of what some regard as a needless incubus ; but the matter should be viewed in its wider bearings.

In the Order of Government passed on the 31st December, 1906, the following words occur :---" It appears to the Government that, if those who have secured a University education are to do the best for their country with the education they have received, it is imperative that they should preserve a sound knowledge of the vernaculars," and, with this object in view, the composition test in question was prescribed for the Intermediate Examination. The same Order deplores the fact that the ordinary University graduate of the present day notoriously neglects his vernacular. I myself have known the case of one, well-versed in English, who, though a Tamil by birth, was obliged to requisition the services of an interpreter in addressing a Tamil audience, owing to his want of facility in his own native tongue. The University of Madras is the University of the Dravidian country, and the Dravidian languages are not the daughters of Sanskrit, but represent an antecedent South Indian civilisation. In this respect we are unique in this part of India. Surely, therefore, every Indian graduate of our University should be able to speak and write freely in his own beautiful vernacular language. What should we think of a graduate of Oxford or Cambridge who, while well acquainted with Greek and Latin, could not write with some measure of freedom and elegance in his own mother tongue ? No dead " classical language," however beautiful, ought to be allowed to usurp the place of our living vernaculars.

If it be argued that a position is given to the vernaculars in Group IV of the Intermediate Examination, an optional group comprising (a) Ancient or Modern History, (b) a classical language, and (c) a second classical language or Indian vernacular language, I venture to predict that, in practice, any hopes raised by such a contention will be largely disappointed. For example, we shall find, almost certainly, that students who take Sanskrit as their " second language" for the Matriculation will avoid Group IV in their Intermediate Examination so as to escape the study of a further classical or vernacular language. It would be at least worth while ascertaining from Principals of Colleges how many students have taken up Group IV as their optional branch for the Intermediate during the current year. If I am not mistaken, we shall find that, granted Government sanction for the Resolution of the Senate to omit Vernacular Composition from the Intermediate curriculum, the vast majority of our future graduates will be men who have obtained their degree without having studied in the least their own vernacular. Is this desirable either from an educational, or a patriotic, or a commonsense point of view ? The Japanese teach modern science mainly through the medium of their vernacular. In Ceylon, " classical languages" have had an undesirable predominance in their educational system, and a halt is now being called.

I trust, therefore, that Government will not sanction the Resolution of the Senate without fuller enquiry into the matter, and that, in any case, some adequate provision may be made to ensure the study by our under-graduates of their own vernacular tongues.

NOTES.

NEW WOOD PRESERVATIVE.

The preservation of wood comprises one of the most economic qns. of the day in certain industries such as the manufacture of Railway sleepers and paving blocks. Various processes have been devised for prolonging the durability of the material when exposed to deteriorating influences of wind and weather or rain, but few have surviving the trying ordeal of practicals application. For this reason creosore injection under pressure remains the most general method in vogue for preserving timber. Attention, however, has now been drawn to a new process, that has been perfected, by means of which the wood is impregnated with a new coal-tar extract called 'Injectol,' comprising a thin, dark-brown liquid of regular density, the viscosity of which varies very slightly under atmospheric changes. The wood to be treated is either soaked in the fluid or the latter is forced into the pores of the timber under pressure, and, owing to its fluedity the antiseptic is capable of penetrating the heart of the wood wore easily and quickly than creosote, while at the same time smaller quantities are required, to secure some comparative dater concerning the preservative quality of 'Injectol' as compared with the more generally adopted mediums, samples of timber treated with each were immersed in a tank containing a highly and rapidly decomposing solution, and permitted to remain there for several months. Upon withdrawal the wood treated with 'Injectol' was found to be in a perfect condition, while the other samples dressed with creosoter presending fluids were found to be extremely decayed, thereby showing that creosœ is only capable of arresting decomposition for a short period. Owing to the success of the new extract, it is arousing the attention Railway authorities and others in trades in which extensive avail is made of timber.